said in the first sentence of this letter, will be complete.

I am unwilling to close this discussion without a word of justice to those who have, of late, been employed on this subject; and, first, I wish to put in one for myself. I desire now and once for all to disclaim all idea of credit, originality, invention, or merit of any kind as due to the suggestion I have made. In the course of a twenty-five years' study of the subject, I latterly found that a system of notation, different from that of Mr. Rickman's, had gradually crept into my memoranda, without which, in fact, after I had got accustomed to it, I found it impossible to describe satisfactorily half the buildings I met with: that which I had found practically useful to myself, I desired to afford to others the opportunity of testing; and I cannot see that in doing so I have rendered myself liable to the charge of arrogance and dictation which your correspondent "F. S. A." sought in his last letter on that account to bring against me. Again; although I was, I believe, the first, in my paper on the Geometrical Period, read at the Lincoln Meeting of the Archæological Institute in July 1848, and published the same month in THE BUILDER, to propose publicly the formal adoption of this new classification; and although the limits of the proposed periods still rest on my own authority alone; yet it is certain that similar ideas must have been running in the heads of several distinguished archæologists at the same moment,—at all events, so far as regards the division of Gothic Architecture into four Styles instead of three. For in 1849 we find Mr. Freeman,* evidently unconscious of my earlier proposition, suggesting an exactly similar fourfold division as subordinate to a higher twofold division; the idea of which he professes to have derived from Mr. Petit's earlier "Remarks on Church Architecture," but which is worked out with an originality of thought that establishes its own claim upon our attention. Next we have, in 1850, Mr. Scott, in his "Plea for Faithful Restoration," putting in a claim not only for the individuality, but the absolute superiority of the "Geometrical variety of the Middle Pointed," in terms which at once show his thorough appreciation, and careful previous study, of the works of this Period. And lastly, we have the ingenious and eloquent, as well as unanswerable appeal of Mr. Poole before the Northamptonshire Architectural Society in October 1850, on behalf of the "Geometrical" Style. That Professor Willis and Mr. Petit are fully alive to the claims of this "transitional" variety to distinct classification their previous writings can leave no doubt. Who, then, would not be willing to share with such writers the merit, if there be any, of assisting in the establishment of a system which may tend to simplify, and therefore to popularise and render more easy of attainment, a study to which we are all so greatly attached, and after which the really interested inquirers, out of so large a body of churchmen, are, even yet, so comparatively limited in number? And here doubtless arises the only question which would cause us to hesitate. Will the adoption of such a system of classification as that which I propose be likely to produce such a result? I entertain a strong opinion that it will. I fear that the present road to knowledge on the subject is blocked up and encumbered with various obstacles and impediments which render it not very easy of approach. I fear, too, on the other hand, that recent publications have been addressed rather to the initiated than to the incipient student; and have treated perhaps more of the *philosophy* than the *history* of architecture; that in searching too deeply for principles, we may run some risk of overlooking the principal object and end of all system and classification, that, namely, of enabling us to convey simply and intelligibly to others the knowledge that we ourselves possess; and that it is possible to overshoot this mark, and to obtain a system which is scientifically correct, but practically useless. Moreover, it appears to me that the road must be so prepared for the beginner as that he will not be called upon to ascend more than a few steps at once: so that he may be able to command and review the ground that he has passed over before he commences his next ascent. It is with this view that I have divided the treatment of the subject into a series of successive publications, of which the first, illustrating the general outline of form in the buildings of the "Seven Periods," has already appeared; and the second, illustrating the nature of the "Mouldings of the Seven Periods," is nearly ready; and all that I ask for is, that no judgment be formed of the value or correctness of the proposed system until a few more of these proofs have made their appearance.

One point I have almost forgotten to notice. So essentially different was the contemporary architecture of different parts of Europe at certain periods, that to endeavour to include the whole under one and the same Nomenclature would appear to be a hopeless task. Let any one who doubts this write out a description of a building of Italy, of the Rhine, of England, and of the North of France, belonging to the middle of the earlier half of the thirteenth century: the following would be the correct designation of such a series of buildings according to our present terms: the first would be "Romanesque," the second "Transitional," the third "Lancet," and the fourth "Geometrical." Now of what possible value would the term be that was general enough to characterise the whole four? Nor can I see the slightest advantage which is to arise from such an attempt: it is true, and it is no less interesting than true, as Mr. Scott has very justly remarked, that there was a time when the designs of all Europe presented the same character, and I agree with him in thinking that this was the period when the art of Mediæval design reached its climax; but this fact affords us no help towards the solution of the difficulty as to the other periods. A three years' study of continental architecture (1832 to 1835) satisfies me that the buildings, not only of different nations, but of different districts, require to be separately classified.

E. SHARPE.

* History of Architecture, p. 352.

THE LOCK CONTROVERSY.

OUR American brethren are quietly walking into us, to use a vulgar expression, and that, too, in all the strong places. Our naval superiority and our super-eminent skill in machinery are both questioned pretty closely. And now comes this new "Rape of the Lock," not by Pope, but Hobbs, who threatens to find a key for every difficulty, and says he could not be resisted by all the wards in Chancery. And Hobbs has done it too, though the lock was a Bramah and has hung boastingly in the window in Piccadilly for many a long day, tempting invasion by the offer of two hundred guineas to any that would pick it. He had previously turned over a Chubb, but under circumstances that did not make the triumph quite a fair one.

His mode of working, as we are told, is this:—He applies a lever to press the bolt in a backward direction, and then proceeds, by means of instruments previously manufactured, to lift the tumblers of the lock one by one, and retain them in their right places. When the last tumbler is lifted the bolt flies back. Thirty days were given to Mr. Hobbs for his attack on the Bramah, and to make his instruments he was allowed to take impressions of the key and the tops of the wards. Day after day he was shut up alone with the lock, none being permitted to enter the room while he was at work; and, with the aid of "thieves' wax," a hinged mirror in the key-hole, a strong light, all sorts of odd instruments, and his own great cleverness, he has succeeded in the task.

For our own part we did not think that any lock could be found, made at a cost which would admit of sale, to resist such appliances, and are astonished that Messrs. Bramah consented to submit it to such practices for so long a period. Whether after all Messrs. Bramah's challenge, as written on the lock, has been met by Mr. Hobbs, is a question: we think not, spite of the arbitrator's award.*

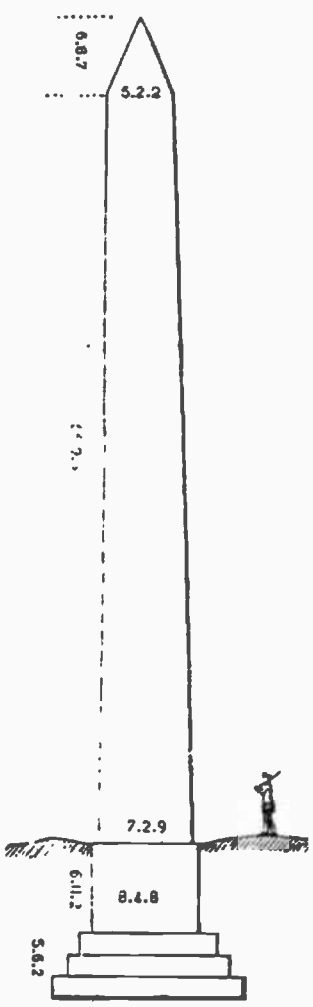
As to the American's own lock, the "Paratoptic," it is a wonderful piece of mechanism, put by its price quite out of the list of commercial locks; but whether even this is impregnable remains to be seen, and will, we hope, be tried.

Is there no public-spirited burglar in London that will come forward for the honour of his country and a round sum of money?

* The challenge was, "The artist who can make an instrument that will pick or open this lock shall receive 200 guineas reward the moment it is produced." Where is the instrument?

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

THE plea in our pages for the transport of the obelisk belonging to us, known as Cleopatra's Needle, has been so generally echoed and assented to, that we may reasonably expect it will not be long before we see that monument here. We have been favoured by Mr. Guillaume with an elevation of the obelisk, and some particulars forwarded to him by a gentleman on the spot, which will interest our readers. Its exact dimensions in French feet are as follow:—Size at bottom, 7ft. 2 . 9; at top, 5ft. 2 . 2; height of square shaft, 56ft. 9 . 5; height of pointed top, 6ft. 8 . 7. The construction below ground is shown on the engraving.



The following is a translation of the inscription upon it:—

"The glorious hero—the mighty warrior—whose actions are great on the banner—the King of an obedient people—a man just and virtuous, beloved by the Almighty Director of the universe—he who conquered all his enemies—who created happiness throughout his dominions—who subdued his adversaries under his sandals. During his life he established meetings of wise and virtuous men in order to introduce happiness and prosperity throughout his empire. His descendants, equal to him in glory and power, followed his example. He was, therefore, exalted by the Almighty-seeing Director of the World. He was the Lord of the Upper and Lower Egypt. A man most righteous and virtuous, beloved